

Wraxall, Nathaniel William,

An answer to the calumnious misrepresentations of the 'Quarterly Review,'
the 'British Critic,' and the 'Edinburgh Review,' contained in their
observations on Sir N. William Wraxall's historical memoirs of his own
time

London 1815

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ANSWER,

&c.

AFTER the very severe personal Attack made upon the Author of these "Memoirs," and upon the Work itself, by the Writers of the "Quarterly Review;"—an Attack in which they have been followed, though with somewhat diminished Asperity, by the "British Critic;"—it might appear like conscious Acquiescence, if I left it wholly without Reply. Yet as I am intimately persuaded that no Panegyric can permanently elevate a mean Work, and that no Censures can long depress a Book of Merit, I should perhaps have left those Strictures to their own intrinsic Weight, if the Editors of the "Quarterly Review" had not wantonly made Sir John Macpherson the Object of their illiberal and pointed Sarcasms. Independant of the high Character, the public Services, the

financial Resources, and recognized Disinterestedness, which Sir John displayed when Governor-General of Bengal;—Facts too well established in the Memory of his Countrymen, to stand in need of my Testimony;—I should have imagined that if any Portions of the present Work could have challenged Respect, Sir John's Communications would have been entitled to it. Can they consider the Particulars given relative to the Emperor Leopold the second; a Prince who was known to have honoured Sir J. Macpherson with his Confidence and Friendship; as destitute of Interest? The Title of these Facts to Belief, is irresistible, and they develop the secret Policy, Feelings, as well as Character of that Sovereign. From what Information more authentic, can contemporary History be generally drawn? The Anecdote of His present Majesty and William, Duke of Cumberland, that of Hyder Ally, and many others, derived from the same Source, which are scattered over the two Volumes, speak for themselves. Contumelious Irony, and insulting Epithets, should be well weighed before they are applied; and when applied without obvious or apparent Reason, they lead us to suspect some concealed Motives

for their Adoption. Can any such have been offered and accepted in the Case before us? The World will judge for themselves. To have censured *me* with severity, is explicable, perhaps deserved, in all Cases natural, and in the common Order of Things. But it is more difficult to account on ordinary Principles, for the Fact of honorable Men exercising the Function of literary Censors, incapable therefore of prostituting or selling their Suffrage; heaping contemptuous Expressions on a distinguished Individual, merely for having contributed some Passages to the Work under their Examination. When one reflects on these Circumstances, one is almost led to imagine that the Article in Question was made *for* them, not *by* them; and though it is impossible to form even a Conjecture of the Quarter from whence such acrimonious Comments could originate, yet is one tempted to exclaim with Faulconbridge in "King John," applying the Words to the literary Fathers of the "Quarterly Review,"

"Sir Robert might have eat his Part in me,

Upon Good Friday, and ne'er broke his Fast.—

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The Charges made against myself, may

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be reduced to three; namely, my Want of *Ability*, and utter *Inaptitude* for executing the Work that I have undertaken; my *Immorality*, and lastly, my *Deviations from Truth*, sometimes resulting from gross Ignorance, sometimes destitute even of that Apology. Heavier Imputations can hardly be affixed on an Author. Let us see how they are sustained.

The “Quarterly Review,” after stating that I have “egregiously mistaken the Amount of my Resources and of my Ability,” compares me for Incapacity and Self-Importance, to “P. P. Clerk of this Parish,” whose “Memoirs” furnish so much ludicrous Entertainment in the Works of *Pope*: while the “British Critic” characterizes the Book as “mere Gossip, and languid Imbecility.” It would not become me to appreciate the Rank which my own Understanding holds in the Scale of Intellect: but, either the Public does not think so meanly of the “Historical Memoirs,” and their Author, or they manifest a most incorrigible Obstinacy and Inattention to the friendly Admonitions reiterated by their literary Guides, who exert every Endeavour to prevent their Readers from throwing

away “Eighteen Shillings on a new Edition in Octavo of the Daily Advertiser.” Now I can assure these Gentlemen, that the first Edition of this imbecile Work, consisting of one Thousand Copies, was sold in thirty-three Days, between the 14th of April, and the 17th of May of the present Year; though the Price was, not *eighteen*, but, *six and twenty* Shillings. No Efforts of the Press could bring out a second Edition before the Middle of June: but of that Edition, very nearly as many have been already sold. How are we to account for this Fact?—“Audacious Charges against distinguished Persons,” Stories resting on no Basis of Truth or Probability, “flippant and offensive Reports,” followed by “pompous Gossip, and inflated Trash;”——how could Men be found so weak as to purchase such a Compilation of Absurdity, Plagiarism, and Matter already better given in the *Annual Register*, or the *Court Calendar*? I leave the Solution of this pecuniary Enigma to the Gentlemen Reviewers, who will doubtless expose the Juggle that has evidently been practised on the Understandings, and on the Pockets of the British Public.

Nor is it merely my Defect of natural Capacity, but, my utter Unacquaintance with the Sources from which alone authentic Materials for composing "Memoirs of my own Time" could have been drawn, that disqualify me, as they assert, for so delicate a Task. "It is very clear," says the *Quarterly Review*, "that Sir Nathaniel was not at all in the Secret of any Party, and the Face of the political World was to him like the Town Clock.—He saw the Hand move, and heard the Bell strike, but observed nothing of the Springs which impelled, and knew nothing of the Principles that regulated the Machine." The "British Critic" observes, "In Fact Sir Wm. Wraxall is not qualified as the Author of Historical Memoirs of my own Time. He has not been behind the Curtain, and seen the Wires of the Puppets worked. To write Memoirs, so that they may form legitimate Materials for History, it is necessary for Men to be able to say, Quorum Pars magna fui." On reading these Animadversions, one is almost tempted to doubt whether the Reviewers had perused the Work which they so severely criticize. It will not be disputed that I lived in daily and intimate Friendship with

the late Lord Sackville, then Lord George Germain, who continued to be Secretary of State down, to January, 1782. From *Him* I surely *might* have known much of the *Secret* of the Time; and that I actually *did* know some Particulars not unimportant, may be seen in the “Memoirs” themselves. From the Duke of Dorset, who was appointed Ambassador to the Court of Versailles, in December, 1783, and whose Confidence, as well as Correspondence I enjoyed during the whole Period of his Embassy, I might have derived similar Information. As I lived almost always in London, and attended the House of Commons regularly; unless I laboured under insurmountable Stupidity, I *must* have caught some Warmth from the Materials and Persons that I approached.

But I differ on another Point, from the Reviewers. For, I think, that if I had been “in the *Secret* of any Party,” if I had “been behind the Curtain, and seen the Wires of the Puppets worked;” if I had been officially entrusted with Facts or Documents of State, I could not have divulged them during the Life of George the third. My very Ability to compose Memoirs of my own Time, would have

constituted my Disqualification. Lord Clarendon, Burnet, Dodington, Horace Walpole, were all dead, before their Memoirs or Reminiscences were given to the World. I am, in my own Person, an Instance and a Proof of the Position that I here maintain. During the Years 1774 and 1775, I had the Honour to be employed most confidentially by the late Queen of Denmark, Caroline Matilda, who then resided in the Hanoverian Dominions, at the Castle of Zell. By that Princess I was repeatedly sent over to His present Majesty, charged with Dispatches of a very interesting Nature, with whose Contents I was intimately acquainted. So strong a sense did the King entertain of my Services rendered to his Sister, that he was graciously pleased through the Medium of Lord North himself, then first Minister, to send me a Present of a Thousand Guineas, accompanied with Assurances of Employment. Lord North delivered the Message to me at Bushy Park, to which Place he honored me with an Invitation for the express Purpose. That Nobleman knew from His Majesty's own Lips, the Nature of the Negotiation with which I had been entrusted by the Queen Matilda. Every Fact here enumerated, can

be authenticated by Persons who are still living, some of whom are of very high Rank But, though above forty Years have elapsed since the Decease of that amiable and unfortunate Princess, I have never alluded in any of my Publications, to the Negotiation in which I was consulted and employed by her Majesty. Yet, if disclosed, it would excite great Interest ; and according to the Principle laid down by the Reviewers, it would "form legitimate Materials for History." But, those worthy Gentlemen and I see Objects through opposite Ends of the Telescope.

I come next to the Charge of Immorality and Indecency, respecting which the "British Critic," after severely arraigning the Work on this ground, says, "To the other Sex, and the Youth of our own, it is a sealed Book, on account of its gross Indecencies." It is to be regretted that the Reviewers should not have glanced at the Passages to which Allusion is thus made. Such general and sweeping Censures, without specifying any particular Stories or Parts, must be considered as very unfair. On what Foundation are they preferred? Is it on the Anecdote related of Marshal Saxe and Madem^{le} de

Chantilly?—But, it will not be contended that in relating the Marshal's Conduct, I have spared the strongest Epithets of Abhorrence and Indignation, which are so justly excited, by his depraved Treatment of an unprotected Female. If it is meant to insinuate that I convey improper Information to the other Sex, then, the Works of Shakespear, Otway, and Congreve, must be interdicted; and still more, the Productions of Pope, of Swift, and of Prior. Nay, every Newspaper must be carefully removed:—for, they disclose far more, than can be found in my two Volumes. But, there remains still a minor imputation, which the “Quarterly Review” qualifies with the Terms of “filthy and indecent Garbage.” Probably They have in View the Series of Facts mentioned after the Account given of Ferdinand the fourth, king of Naples, which are illustrative of Neapolitan and of French Manners. But are these fastidious Critics aware, or are they ignorant, that in De Thou, Sully, Davila, and D'Aubigné, similar “Garbage” is found? Are not Smollett, Gibbon, and Hawksworth, full of such Details? Sir John Dalrymple, by express Permission, nay, under the Sanction of His present Majesty, has published

Letters far more exceptionable in Point of Delicacy, (as for Instance the memorable Letter of Charles the second, to his Sister, Henrietta, Duchess of Orleans, dated "Whit-hall, 27th Feb', 1669," relative to which, Dalrymple himself says, that "it could hardly have been expected from a royal Hand,") than any thing to be met with in my "Memoirs."

It remains to meet and to repel the Attack made on my Veracity; which Imputation, the "Quarterly Review" endeavours to sustain by selecting out of the two Volumes, about fourteen prominent Instances of Error, or as he denominates them, Falsity. That my Work is not exempt from many mistakes, I readily admit: but, the Reviewers, while censuring me, should have been careful not to fall into the very Predicament which they reprobate. Great Triumph is assumed, because I have named *the Duke of Dorset* as having informed me of the Circumstance attending Lord Camden's being invested with the Order of the *Garter*. No doubt I erred in thinking that I received the Account from *the Duke*. But, even the Reviewers dare not

assert that the Anecdote itself is false. They “never read, they say, a more *impertinent* Story.” Impertinent Stories may however be true Stories. In Fact, tho’ the Duke of Dorset could not have related it to me, there are ten Persons now living, who know and are ready to depose to its Truth. How, indeed, could I invent it? I did not even know that Lord Camden’s Christian Names were *John Jeffreys*, except in Consequence of the King’s Remark. Here then, tho’ I was partially mistaken, I was radically accurate.

In another Assertion, namely that I met Mr. Pitt in Company with Mr. Rose, on his way to Paris, *at Antwerp*, in August, 1783, I have likewise erred. On appealing, as I did, to Mr. Rose himself, a few Weeks ago, for the Truth of the Fact, he wrote me, “I was at Antwerp, in, or about the Month of August, 1783, with Lord Thurlow, on a Tour thro’ a part of the Continent. *Mr. Pitt was not with me*; but I met him, I think, in October, at Paris, where he went after a short Stay at Rheims.”—It appears therefore that in this Matter likewise I fell into a partial Mistake. In all the other Instances brought

to prove my Deviation from Fact, the Reviewers are either mistaken, or ignorant, or they substitute their own Narration as more worthy of Credit than mine, tho' without adducing any Proof. But, what shall we say to Men, who are so utterly unacquainted with the very Matters on which they presume to decide and to accuse, as to assert that "Robinson's counter-signing, as *Secretary of the Treasury*, on the Refusal of Lord Weymouth, the *Secretary of State*, an Order for the Attack on Pondicherry, in 1778, is a perfect Impossibility?"

Mr. Robinson, writing to Sir John Macpherson, from "Wyke House, Isleworth, 23d May, 1800," in a Letter, which has been long since printed, expressly says, "My Correspondence with the Nabob (of Arcot,) shall be produced, if desired, which it fell to my lot (*though not within my Province,*) to carry on; as also, in Concert with the Chairman and Deputy Chairman, as a *Special Committee*, to write out *Orders* to the Governor and Council of Madras, for the Capture of Pondicherry, which was effected so expeditiously, when *His Majesty's Secretary of State* would

not sign such Orders. I leave this Letter to be denied, or contradicted, by the Reviewers.*

With similar Boldness, but with as ill Success, they pronounce on Mr. Fraser's presenting to King George the second, as Under Secretary of State, a Paper for His Majesty's Signature: "a Duty," say they, "which never *by any Chance*, could have devolved on Mr. Fraser, or any other Person in his Situation." What! Not in Case of the Secretary of State's Illness, or necessary Absence, or Dismission, or under pressing Circumstances, in Order to expedite the Dispatch of public Business? Do these Gentlemen Reviewers know or recollect, that on the 18th of December, 1783, this same Mr. Fraser, and Mr. Nepean, (now Sir Evan,) *as Under Secretaries of State*, by Command of His present Majesty, brought and delivered up into the King's Hand, not merely Papers, but, the Seals of Lord North's and Mr. Fox's Departments, on their Dismission from Office? It is evident that the Editors of the "*Quarterly*

* The printed Letter is left with Messrs. Cadell and Davies, for general Inspection.

Review," have either got out of their Depth, or have hoodwinked their own Judgement, and modulated their own Opinions, in Compliment to others.

After *garbling*, not citing, the Account that I have given of the late Lord Liverpool; and *omitting*, for Reasons which will be obvious to every Reader, some of the most discriminating Circumstances of that Nobleman's ordinary Demeanour described by me; the "Quarterly Review" says, "In this Character of Lord Liverpool, tho' it may be in the main, tolerably correct, there are some Errors, which prove that Sir Nathaniel *had no personal Acquaintance* with the Person whose Portrait he draws. For Instance, nothing can be less accurate than the Statement that His Lordship's Education was narrow, and that he was more read in Men than in Books." I not only was known to Mr. Jenkinson with great Familiarity, from 1781 down to 1786, when he went up to the House of Peers; but I was in constant Habits of meeting and conversing with him. I have dined at his Country Seat, Addiscombe Place, near Croydon, in 1784; as, probably the Dowager Countess of Liverpool,

and the present Duchess of Dorset, who were both there, may remember. Even down to a much later Period of his Life, he continued to honour me with his Regard; and as late as 1797, he presented me, himself, in the Queen's Drawing Room at St. James's, to the Princess of Orange. So much for my "personal Acquaintance" with the Earl of Liverpool. As to his "University Education," and his having "continued all his Life, what is called a *bookish* Man," which the Reviewers assert; I can only repeat, that tho' he might be "a classic Scholar," and might "have possessed a great Variety of reading," yet his whole Life and Elevation sufficiently prove, that "he had read Men more than Books."

If I do not descend to answer and refute the other Instances adduced of pretended Error or Falsehood, it is because the Examples cited, are either in themselves of little Moment, or must rest on the Degree of Credibility due to the Reviewers, as opposed to my own Testimony. Let the Public decide between us. It is not of material Consequence, whether "the Royal George" went down in the midst of *Portsmouth Harbour*, or at *Spithead*.

Nor is it very important, whether Lord Bute sold his House in Berkeley Square to Lord Shelburne, *before* he inhabited it, or *afterwards*. The “Royal George” perished in an Instant, by the Effect of fatal Negligence; and the Earl of Bute constructed the magnificent Mansion which was purchased by Lord Shelburne. These constitute the leading Facts in both Cases. There are other Passages, where the Reviewers have, either wilfully or unintentionally, mistated and misinterpreted my Meaning. I have never asserted, as they affect to suppose and to assume, that “*the Cabinet* of 1801, considered Peace with France as impolitic, unsafe, and unwise:” but, that *His Majesty* was known so to regard it; and therefore that “Lord Hawksbury affixed his Signature to the Articles, not only without *the King’s* Consent or Approbation, but, without his Knowledge.” The Difference between the two Statements is obvious.

The “Quarterly Review” arraigns severely the Details into which I have entered, when discussing the Characters or public Merits of eminent Men. “He seems to consider it necessary,” say they, “to write a professed

Review of the Manners, Morals, Talents, and *Res gestæ* of each. In this way Lord North and Lord Sackville are spread over forty Pages; and Pitt and Fox have, each, near thirty to their respective Shares." On reading this Charge, one is tempted almost to doubt whether it can be serious. Do not Memoirs necessarily include Biography in their Grasp? What constitutes the Charm of *Plutarch*, except this very Circumstance, that he enters minutely into the domestic and private Life, as well as into the official Acts, of his Heroes? Even *Suetonius*, a Writer of very inferior Merit in many Points of View, yet awakens Attention by the Anecdotes that he recounts of the Cæsars, because he conducts us into their Apartments, and renders us familiar with them. De Thou and D'Aubigné descend to similar Details. Even Grammont, St. Simon, and Horace Walpole, interest us on the same Principle. If Fox and Pitt, if Lord North and Lord Sackville, if Burke and Dunning, do not challenge minute Investigation, who can deserve it? Lord Clarendon and Burnet are liable to the same Accusation, which constitutes indeed their greatest Claim to be read by Posterity. It will not, I hope, be said that I am com-

paring myself to these distinguished Writers, because, like *Trincalo* in “the Tempest,” I attempt to “creep under their Gabardine,” in Order to avoid the Storm. I only endeavour to justify my Attempt, by setting up their Precedent.

The “British Critic” is indeed at Variance on this Point, with the “Quarterly Review;”—for the former of these Publications, when speaking of “the Characters of the principal political Leaders of the Day,” adds, “these we esteem by far the best part of his Work.” They retract, it is true, their Approbation in the next Sentence, by subjoining that the Characters “are written in a loose, prolix, *wordy* Style.” But, can we annex any Value to the Praise, or any Importance to the Blame of Men, who arrogating to decide on literary Merit, are not even exempt from Errors of Orthography? Of Men who write *Vallois*, for Valois; *Luzinska* for Leczinska, *Malgrida* for Malagrida, *Haydue* for Heyduc, *Vintrimille* for Vintimille; and many others? I forbear to make any Comment on the Manner in which both these Reviews have mentioned the Prosecution

commenced against me by Count Woronzow, for having inadvertently mentioned his Name in a way hurtful to his Feelings; a Circumstance which could not have arisen from any Intention to injure or offend, which I regret, and for which, as soon as I was apprized of it, I made him every becoming apology. If Decency and Liberality of Mind did not restrain the Pens of these Critics, or moderate their virtuous Indignation, other Considerations might and ought to have imposed Limits on them. Are they aware, that by attempting through the Medium of the Press, to influence the public Mind, and to anticipate the supposed Judgment of a Court of criminal Law, on a Matter pending, and not yet come to hearing; *they* are guilty of a far more heinous Offence, than the one which it is falsely affected to attribute to *me*? For, the Purity and Majesty of English Jurisprudence, discountenances, reprobates, and punishes, every Appeal to the Passions of the Multitude, as subversive of the first Principles of Equity and Justice.

Having now so far finished my Defence at the Bar of literary Criticism, I will candidly

confess the inherent, indelible, and inexpiable Faults which pervade every Page of the “Historical Memoirs,” and of which I own myself culpable: nay, from which I principally claim for the Work, any Title to be read either by the present, or by the future Age. They are,

Its Freedom, Impartiality, and Truth.

I am well aware that these Qualities never yet did recommend, and never will recommend, to the Favour of Princes, Ministers, or of the Great. They deprecate all Disclosures; hardly approving even Panegyric, unless restrained within cautious, humble, and guarded Limits. Party, and Party only, can in this Country, support the Man who ventures to spurn these prudent Boundaries. But I have not secured that Protection. Though nine years have scarcely elapsed since Pitt and Fox, both, paid the Debt to Nature; though the first Offices of the State, and the Benches in either House of Parliament, are still filled with their respective Enemies, Relatives, and Adherents; I have, (most imprudently I own,) spoken of them, as I would

do of the Ministers of Queen Anne; of Lord Godolphin, and Lord Bolingbroke. So have I of George the third, as if I were writing of William the third, or of Elizabeth. All the affectionate Veneration necessarily inspired by his Virtues, all the Admiration excited by the Rectitude of his Intentions, has not induced me to attempt to conceal or to deny, that almost from the Period of his Accession, down to the Termination of the American War, His present Majesty did not enjoy Popularity. He might have merited it, but he did not possess it. Where then, I would ask, can this Work find Protectors, except in those who respect *Truth* as the only Quality that can render History valuable? I well know that I have neither conciliated the Followers of Pitt or of Fox. Of Course, in the Spirit of Party, I can hope for no Asylum. I look beyond the present Generation for my Reward, namely, public Approval. That Hope, whether fallacious or not, has hitherto sustained me under literary and legal Attacks. It will animate me in the future Progress of these Memoirs; which, whatever may be their Errors or Defects, and whatever Treatment their Author may

experience from the Age in which he lives,
will, he confidently trusts, be favorably re-
ceived by Posterity.

N. WILL^M. WRA^XALL.

Charlton, near Cheltenham,

22d August, 1815.

I HAD scarcely finished my Answer to the "Quarterly Review" and "British Critic," when I find myself attacked by a still more formidable, because a more voluminous, and if possible, a more acrimonious Antagonist, in the Pages of the "Edinburgh Review." Though, as coming after the two former, he can only glean the Field which they have reaped, and has only repeated the same Charges or Accusations which they had already preferred; yet having thought it necessary to bestow on my Work, in Order, as he says, "to expose its Worthlessness," near two and forty Pages of his loyal and high principled Review, he claims from me a separate and appropriate Reply. He begins by animadverting on my Account of Catherine the second. His Words are, speaking of the second Edition, "The Deaths of the Emperor Peter, of Prince Ivan, of the supposed Princess Tarrakanoff, of the Grand Duchess the first Wife of Paul, and indeed that of the Princess of Wirtemberg, are still laid to the Charge of the Empress.

Such a Series of Murders, including that of a Husband, of *a Boy*, and of three young Women, one of whom was a Daughter in Law, has not been charged on any Individual, at least in the modern History of Europe."

Now, in Order to expose the Injustice and Falsity of the two first of these Accusations, namely, that of Peter the third and of Ivan, (which latter Prince, though he was born early in 1740, and killed by his Guards in 1764, the "Edinburgh Review" denominates *a Boy*,) I have only to cite my own Account. No Man disputes that Catharine ascended or assumed the Russian Throne, by the Deposition of her Husband, which was followed, a few Days afterwards, by his Death. I have said, when mentioning him and Ivan, "Sir Thomas Wroughton always spoke to me of Catharine's Participation or Acquiescence in the Death of Peter the third, as *involuntary, reluctant, and the Result of an insurmountable Necessity*. He even considered her *Knowledge* of the *Destruction* of the unfortunate Emperor Ivan, who was stabbed by his own Guards at Schlussembourg in 1764, with a View to prevent his being liberated by Mirovitsch, as *exceedingly problema-*

tical." This is almost the only *Mention* that I have made either of one, or of the other of those Princes, throughout the whole Work; except that I elsewhere say, "Peter the third disappeared in 1762, as the unfortunate Emperor Ivan did in 1764." What Reply can these worthy Scotch Reviewers set up, after such an Exposal of their calumnious Misrepresentation! Their zeal to rescue Catherine's Memory from Imputation, even at the Expense of Truth, would indeed be ludicrous, if it did not excite Indignation. One would almost imagine that it was "the great Napoleon," or the virtuous Carnot, in whose Defence they had drawn their Pen. While I am speaking on this Subject, I will further add, that all the Information which I ever received at Petersburg in 1774, when Ivan had been dead only ten years, and Peter the third scarcely twelve; went to confirm Sir Thomas Wroughton's Opinion, of Catherine's Repugnance to sanction or permit any Violence being used towards the deposed Emperor, her Husband. She long refused, even with Tears, to authorize Measures of Rigour, and he fell a Victim to revolutionary military Necessity, and the Fears of the Conspirators who had placed

Catharine on the Throne. She was only a passive Agent in the Business. Nor is it in any Manner proved that she was acquainted with Mirovitsch's Attempt to liberate Ivan. The Empress received the Intelligence of that tragical Event, while in public Company at Riga; and Opinions were greatly divided on the Subject, at the Time. But, whether she was guilty or innocent, *I* have no where given even an Opinion, throughout this whole Work. Yet, these constitute *two* out of the "Series of Murders," which "the Edinburgh Review" says, I have "laid to the Charge of the Empress."

Relative to the Death of the supposed Princess Tarrakanoff, it is not necessary for me to make any Defence, having only alluded briefly to Castera's Account of that Event, published in 1797, and having given at some length, Sir John Dick's Explanation of his Share in the Transaction; leaving the Judgement to be formed respecting it, to the Reader. Far from aggravating Catherine's Culpability in the part which *She* acted towards the Female in Question, I have rather defended her Conduct. My Words are, "It is even very difficult altogether to condemn

the Empress Catherine, for endeavouring to get Possession of her Person." And I have stated my Reason for so thinking, namely, that Impostors were nearly as dangerous to a Czarina placed on the Throne of Muscovy by a Revolution, as a rightful Pretender to the Crown. "These Considerations," I have added, "must at least in a political Point of View, *justify* Catherine for taking Measures to prevent the Lady in Question, from being made an Instrument in the Hands of vindictive or ambitious Individuals, to accomplish their Projects of Vengeance against herself." I have neither asserted nor denied, that the pretended Princess Tarrakanoff was drowned by the Waters of the Neva entering her Prison. Castera says that she did so perish. Sir John Dick admits that she died in Prison: but he asserts, her End was produced by chagrin. Let the Reader judge between the two Accounts. And now I would calmly ask the "Edinburgh Reviewers," how they can so disgrace their own Characters and Profession, as to lend themselves to such Attacks as these? Their own Feelings, and the public Condemnation, will amply avenge me, by exposing them to general Censure.

I come to the fourth Charge against me, that of the Death of the Grand Duchess, first Wife of Paul : a Charge drawn up with elaborate Malevolence, and supported with no ordinary Degree of historical and critical Ability. “ No murder recorded in civilized History,” say the Edinburgh Reviewers, “ approaches this. Paul is involved in it, as much as his Mother : for it varies the Atrocity very slightly, whether he acted from Subserviency to the Empress, from Adoption of her flagitious Policy, or from Resentment at the supposed Gallantries of his Wife.”—— They add, “ To publish such Stories lightly, is no small Offence.”——Who, on perusing these Passages, would not be led to imagine that I had now for the first Time revealed to the World this Story ; or at least first published it thro’ the Medium of the Press ? But, unfortunately for the Reviewers, as they themselves are obliged to admit, the whole Narration has been given in Print, eighteen years ago, in French, a Language much more universally read than English ; printed at Paris, in 1797, immediately after the Empress Catherine’s Decease, and circulated all over Europe. Paul had then newly ascended the Russian Throne, and scarcely twenty one

Years had elapsed since his first Wife's Death. Neither He, nor his Ministers, could be ignorant of the Existence of the Work in Question; and the Lapse of Time was not sufficiently great, to have carried off all the Individuals who might have elucidated the Nature of the Grand Duchess's End. Even *Levesque*, who mentions the Event, tho' more doubtfully, and in a Manner that leaves his own Opinion of it uncertain, published his Work in 1800. Yet Paul never attempted to answer these calumnious Misrepresentations, tho' he reigned down to 1801. It has been truly said that "an injudicious Friend is the worst of Enemies." The Edinburgh Reviewers stand in this Predicament. For, they must either be compelled to admit that Paul, knowing himself and the Empress his Mother to be innocent, yet calmly acquiesced in the Accusation; not participating the Anxiety manifested by his present Advocates, and utterly regardless of his Reputation: or they must be reduced to suppose that he had Reasons for not stirring the Business of his first Consort's Death. I leave them to choose between the two Alternatives. They cannot pretend to believe that Paul, even tho' he had been actually implicated in the Grand

Duchess's End, could have wanted venal and prostitute Pens to have undertaken his Defence. The historic, as well as the poetic Muse, frequently indeed succeeds best in Fiction. The Application of these Remarks will be easily made by the Edinburgh Reviewers.

Let us now advert to my own Account of the Event under Discussion. It is given on the Testimony of two Princes of Hesse Philipstahl who were at Vienna in 1778, and seemed to derive some Probability or Confirmation, from the Circumstance of the Person named as the Grand Duchess's Lover, being then resident in the Austrian Capital. But I have contented myself with relating the Story, without asserting that I believed the Empress or Paul to have committed the Act attributed to them. It is true that I have added, "When we contemplate the History of the imperial Family of Russia, from the Reign of Peter the first inclusive, down to the present Time, we shall find nothing in the Story above related, either improbable in itself, or inconsistent with the Measures to which the Sovereigns of that Empire have continually had Recourse, under similar Cir-

cumstances, in various Instances." Do not the Reviewers know that the Wife of the Czarowitz Alexis, only Son of Peter the great, perished in 1715, precisely like Wilhelmina, Princess of Hesse Darmstadt, *in Child-bed*; and that her Death was occasioned by the ferocious Treatment of her Husband? She was in the Flower of Youth, beautiful, virtuous, and at least as much an Object of Compassion, as the first Wife of Paul. Did not Peter the great soon afterwards put Alexis to Death, *privately*, while in close Confinement, and without Trial of any Kind? —a Transaction which has no Parallel in modern History, except Philip the second and Don Carlos. Contemplate the inhuman Executions, and arbitrary Acts of barbarous Power, exercised under Elizabeth, Catherine's Predecessor. They excite Horror, and may justify us in supposing that Events, which never could be credited, if the Scene lay at Stockholm, at Berlin, or at Madrid, might possibly have been true at Petersburg. If, nevertheless, I were called on to state my own Opinion respecting the Death of the Grand Duchess in Question, I owe it to my Love of Truth to say, that I believe it resulted from natural Causes, and was not ac-

celerated by any Violence. But, as no Measures were ever adopted either by Catherine or by Paul, to disprove the Reports circulated under the former, and printed under the latter Sovereign, accusing them of having accelerated her End, the Subject must remain Matter of historical Doubt and Discussion.

It is a Duty incumbent on the “Edinburgh Reviewers,” not merely as calling Themselves impartial and honorable literary *Censors*, but from Regard to their moral Character as *Men*; to explain on what Ground they have thought proper to accuse me of laying to Catherine’s Charge, the last of this “Series of Murders.” I mean, that of the Princess of Wirtemberg. They must either have done it from a systematic Sacrifice of Truth to other Motives best known to Themselves; or they never can have read the Remarks made by me on the Event in Question:—for, my Opinion and Observations are altogether favorable to the Empress, and tend to acquit her of any Participation in that Princess’s Death, even on the Supposition that it was not natural: a Supposition which I by no means sanction. That the il-

lustrious and unfortunate Lady was confined in the Interior of Muscovy, for some asserted Errors of Conduct; that she there expired at the End of about eighteen Months; that her Body was refused to be delivered up to her Parents; that no *Procès verbal*, or authenticated Account of her Disorder and Decease, was ever published by the Court of Petersburg, or of Stutgard; that injurious Reports respecting her End were circulated thro'out Europe, and obtained considerable Belief even in this Country;——on all these Points, there is no Difference of Opinion. They are universally admitted. Now, what have I said?—After stating the Suspicions entertained of Poison, or other Means having been resorted to, I add, “It is natural to ask, Why did Catherine cause the Princess to be imprisoned or poisoned? Her Gallantries, however culpable or notorious they might be, yet constituted no Crime against the Empress of Russia; who exhibited in her own Conduct, an Example of Emancipation from all Restraint and Decorum on the Article of female Irregularities of Deportment.”——“In the Case of the two Emperors, Peter the third and Ivan; as well as in the Instances of the pretended Princess Tarraka-

noff, and of the first Grand Duchess of Russia; the Motives for her Commission of a Crime, by depriving them of Life, are obvious. *But, none such appear in the Instance before us.*"——What Answer can the Reviewers make to this Charge of wilful Misrepresentation and false Accusation, which I bring against them?

Having thus vindicated myself, as I trust, satisfactorily, from the five Imputations of the Edinburgh Reviewers, respecting the Empress of Russia, and retorted on themselves the calumnious Accusations with which they have loaded me; I will only add that I perfectly acquiesce in the Conclusion to which they come at last. They say, "The Probability seems to be, that this Princess, at the Desire of her Husband, for real or supposed Indiscretions, was relegated to a Provincial Prison, in a Country where the secret Death of an illustrious Prisoner, tho' really natural, might be plausibly imputed to Assassination." That the present King of Wirtemberg proved to George the third, by Documents and Papers the most authentic, that he had not any Knowledge of, or Participation in, his first Wife's Death, is incontest-

ible. His Majesty, as I have stated, “after a full Inspection of them, became perfectly convinced of his having had no Part in that dark and melancholy Transaction.” This Fact I have given on the Authority of a Gentleman who well knew, and had seen, those Proofs. He is the same Individual, whom the Edinburgh Reviewers contemptuously call my “Informer,” and of whose interesting Recital they speak, as “a long and *very dull* Story.” These Reviewers are unconsciously treading on very delicate Ground, and should be reminded of Hamlet’s Advice to the Players, “not to say more than is set down for them.” “His Majesty’s Reluctance and Hesitation” to conclude the Union of the Prince of Wirtemberg with his eldest Daughter, to which I allude; probably arose only from parental Attachment. And, without having Recourse to any Supposition of Violence, we may easily conceive that the Decease of the first Princess might have been caused by her own Situation, shut up in a Muscovite Castle, deprived of her German Attendants, male and female, a Prey to Solitude and chagrin. Such Circumstances are usually of themselves sufficient to abbreviate the Term of human Life.

I shall now endeavour with Calmness,—for Truth is a powerful Buckler;—to repel some of the minor Calumnies or Distortions of Fact, in which the Reviewers indulge themselves. Joseph, King of Portugal, they represent me to have described, “as a drunken old Moor.” My Words are these. “In his Cheeks he had a high scorbutic Humour, attributed commonly to Excesses of Wine; though it might partly arise from violent Exercise constantly taken under a burning Sun. His Face, indeed, was nearly as dusky as that of a Moor.” With similar Regard to Veracity, these Gentlemen say, “Sir Nathaniel’s *Hero*, among the Sovereigns of the eighteenth Century, is Louis the fifteenth:”—an assertion contradicted by the Memoirs under our Review. I have, indeed, spoken of a *Portion* of Louis’s Reign, with the warmest approbation. So I should have done, when writing of the “*Quinquennium Neronis*,” the first five Years of Nero, if I had composed the History of that execrable Monster’s Life. But I have depicted Louis the fifteenth during the *concluding* Years of his Government, as a man sunk in every degrading Gratification or Pursuit. After stating that “Louis, during his last Years, excites Disgust, unqualified by any Sentiment of Pity or of Respect;” I add,

“His Death, which took Place under these Circumstances, was hailed by the French, as the *Æra* of their Liberation from a Yoke equally disgraceful and severe.” Reviewers, who thus unblushingly trample on Truth, must set little Value on Character, or must hold the understandings of Mankind in great Contempt. I have elsewhere said, when mentioning Louis the fifteenth, “Unquestionably, the four last Years of his Reign, were passed in a Manner worthy of Sardanapalus; oblivious of his public Duties, insensible to national Glory, and lost to every Sentiment of private Virtue, or even of Decorum.” And this is the King, whom I am represented as having made my “Hero.”

Nor have they less misrepresented my Assertion, that “Louis covered himself and his country with military Glory.” The Paragraph in Question is as follows. “If Louis the fifteenth, by the Peace of 1736, acquired Lorrain for France; he covered himself and his Country with military Glory *during the War that commenced in 1741, on the Death of the Emperor Charles the Sixth.*” Can this Fact be disputed? Did not Marshal Saxe defeat us and our Allies, in repeated Battles; overrun the whole Netherlands,

break down the Dutch Barrier, and threaten the total Overthrow of the Balance of Europe, as much as France did in 1793? At the Peace of Aix la Chapelle, in 1748, Louis had attained to a very elevated Point of Glory, cemented by Moderation. But he lived to become the Scorn of his Subjects and of Europe. While, however, I thus expose the wanton or inexcusable Inattention to Fact in the Reviewers, I must with equal Candour admit that they have pointed out an Error in this part of my Work, which I gladly correct. It is where I have said that Henry the fourth conquered the Counties of *Bourg* and *Bresse*. It should have been *Bugey* and *Bresse*. The Mistake was a mere Inadvertence of the Pen, but I return them Thanks for having noticed it. Indeed, no details, however minute, seem to have been considered by them as beneath their Notice, which might, as they hoped, cover me with Confusion. I would nevertheless ask, on what Ground they presume to assert that I have made "a horrible Insinuation against the late Stadtholder." *Where, and what* is it? They are bound to speak out. I have said of the Prince of Orange, that, "after arriving in this Country, under a dark political Cloud, and after re-

siding here many years, without acquiring the public Esteem, or redeeming his public Character, he finally and precipitately quitted England under a still darker Cloud." What "horrible Insinuation" is couched under these words? "Honi soit, qui mal y pense."

I pass over the coarse and vulgar accusations of "Nastiness, Obscenity, Impurity," &c. these being, as I before observed, only "the Gleanings of the Field;" and having already answered their Predecessors, the "Quarterly Review" and "British Critic," on all these Points. But I cannot allow their Animadversions on the Fate of John and Cornelius de Witt, to remain unnoticed. If the Edinburgh Reviewers had looked into the *second* Edition of My Work, which lay before them; they would there have seen, that in order to guard against malignant Representations respecting the Death of the two De Witts, which, I was sensible, might be made, from the brief manner in which I had alluded to their tragical End, I have said, "Van Berkel merited the Fate which *unjustly befel the two De Witts*, and only escaped it by the inert and incapable Conduct of the Stadtholder." Yet, this is the Passage for which the

Reviewers assert, "I should be punished by the general Execration of Mankind," as exhibiting "Symptoms of unmanly Ferocity," and "degrading the English Language into a Vehicle of cowardly and sanguinary Maxims." Perhaps, however, I ought not to be surprised at this exquisite Sensibility of the Edinburgh Reviewers, when engaged in the pious Office of rescuing from Odium, the name of *Van Berkel*; an Enemy of England and of the House of Orange, devoted to the Interests of France and of America. He was a natural and proper Object of *their* Admiration, in Proportion as he excites opposite Sensations in every loyal Bosom.

Whether *Thiebault* or I are most in the right, as to the *Cause* of Prince Ferdinand of Brunswic's Dismission from the Prussian Service, is a Matter of very little Moment. I am most ready to allow and believe, that *Thiebault*, who resided long at Berlin, is more likely to have given the true Reason, than myself. The unworthy Motives assumed by the Reviewers, as dictating my Mention of the Regent, followed by their Comments on my Assertion, that "His present Majesty resembles the Antonines, in the leading Fea-

tures of his Character ;"—such animadversions neither admit Reply, nor merit an answer. But, when they pass the Line of Truth, in Order to oppress me, I shall always flatly contradict them. How are they warranted in asserting that I have said, "George the second *eagerly* told the Countess of Yarmouth, *as a Piece of good News*, 'Freddy is dead.' My Account runs thus. "His Majesty had just sat down to Play, and was engaged at Cards, when a Page, dispatched from Leicester House, arrived, bringing Information that the Prince was no more. He received the Intelligence *without testifying either Emotion or Surprise*. Then rising, he crossed the Room to Lady Yarmouth's Table, who was likewise occupied at Play ; and leaning over her Chair said to her in a low Tone of Voice, in German, "Fritz is dode." Freddy is dead. Having communicated it to Her, he instantly withdrew." —Where is the *Eagerness*, or the *Joy*, *as at a piece of good News*, here manifested ? It exists only in the Pages of these Scotch *Munckhausens*, who exaggerate or twist every Fact to their own Purposes. That George the second did not love his eldest Son, nor perhaps had any great Reason so to do, is

Matter of Notoriety: but he did not disgrace himself before Spectators, by displaying his Satisfaction at the Prince's Decease. How hard run must these Reviewers have been, to find *real* Matter of Censure or of Condemnation in my Work, when they are reduced to *invent* Circumstances, to suit the humiliating Task which they have undertaken to perform!

But, we come now to "the Coalition of Lord North and Fox;" a subject on which their Feelings mastering their Judgement, have carried them far beyond the sober Bounds of Reason or of Decorum. While they accuse me of "atrociously libelling the Memory of Lord North;" because I assign Motives to justify or palliate his Union with Fox, drawn from Prudence, and from his political Situation at the Close of the American War; they suppose me to be animated by "Rancour" against Mr. Fox, which Sentiment they ingeniously ascribe to "Sycophancy." To whom, I would ask, could I make my Court in 1815, by descending systematically to calumniate Mr. Fox, if I were capable of such Baseness? It would be thrown away on the King, and no Man

doubts that it would awaken Sentiments of mingled Aversion and Resentment in the Bosom of the Regent. Lord Liverpool, I fancy, will not suspect me of meaning to render myself acceptable to *him*, by traducing an illustrious Adversary, long since dead. "But, it requires," say the Reviewers, "the fullest Operation of the composing Power of Contempt, to preserve the mind from some Indignation, at reading in such a writer as this, that Mr. Fox's Claims on Office were unsustained by moral Qualities." Did these Gentlemen never hear the Answer of Father O'Leary to the Bishop of Waterford, when discussing the Doctrine of Purgatory? "Your Lordship," said He, "may go *farther*, and fare *worse*." I have spoken of Mr. Fox, as I thought of him, with Admiration, but, with Freedom; and I believe even his Friends in general admit, with Candour and Impartiality, though I differed from him on political Subjects, and peculiarly disapproved of the part that he took after the Commencement of the French Revolution.

It is, however, only by unfairly selecting a few detached Words of a long Sentence, and reasoning on so fallacious a Basis, cal-

culated for low Purposes of Deception, that the Reviewers can pretend even to accuse me of diminishing Mr. Fox's Claim to moral Esteem and approbation. I regret the Necessity of citing from my own Work, but it is necessary to my Honour, to expose the malignant and uncandid Nature of the Attacks made on me. In summing up Mr. Fox's Character, I have said, "If Energy of Mind, Enlargement of Views, Firmness of Character, Amenity of Manners, Acquaintance with foreign Courts and Languages, Facility in conducting Business, and prodigious intellectual Powers, combining Eloquence, Application, as well as Discernment;—if these Endowments are considered as forming an incontestable Claim to public Employment, *unsustained by moral Qualities, or by Property*; we must condemn the Sentence of Exclusion passed upon him. Those Persons on the other Hand, who consider all Talent, however eminent, as radically defective, unless *sustained by Decorum, and a Regard for Opinion*; as well as all who prefer *Sobriety of Conduct, Regularity of Deportment, and the Virtues of private Life*, above any Ability which Nature can bestow on Man;—lastly, all who regard Judgement, *under the Controul of*

strict Principle, as the most indispensable Requisite of a Minister, to whom the public Honour and Felicity are in some Measure necessarily entrusted;—such persons will probably hesitate before they decide too hastily, on the Degree of Censure or of Commendation, which the King's Conduct towards Fox, ought to excite in our Minds." Now, after perusing this Description, any unprejudiced Mind may pass Sentence. Let it be remembered too, that the Portrait here drawn, is not the Mr. Fox of *Fifty*, such as we remember him, residing at St. Anne's Hill, a married Man, leading a domestic Life, in the Bosom of Letters and Researches of Taste: but, it is Mr. Fox at *thirty two*, as he was in 1781, living in St. James's Street, and still devoted to those Gratifications by which he had impaired his Health, ruined his Fortune, and diminished his brilliant Reputation.

The Reviewers dilate with a sort of Exultation, on the Circumstances of Mr. Fox's having passed three nights, at Lord Rockingham's house, armed, during the Riots of June, 1780; and on his having collared one of the Rioters, whom he brought Prisoner to Grosvenor Square. No Man ever questioned

his Attachment to the Head of his own Party, or his Abhorrence of the Excesses of a ferocious Mob, which manifested as much Antipathy to the Members of Opposition, as to the Government. But, the Question is, Did Mr. Fox, “when pressed in the House of Commons, to co-operate for the Extrication of the Capital, lend any Support to Administration in that Moment of national Distress,” as Burke did? I shall not descend to answer the Accusation of “slandering Lord Effingham,” or “insinuating that the Opposition were connected with the Rioters;” because only determined Malignity can lay such absurd Imputations to my Charge, after perusing the Passages where those Subjects are mentioned in the Memoirs. On General Fitzpatrick, I am necessitated to say a few Words, tho’ reluctantly, as I am charged with “Falsehood,” in speaking of the Decay of his Talents, previous to his Decease. The last Time that I ever met that distinguished Person in Company, was, one Morning, at Cholmondeley House, a very short Time before his Death; when, not only his Faculties, but even his Articulation seemed to me to have sustained a Diminution, or a Shock; tho’ probably, as *Prior* said of Charles, Earl

of Dorset, he might still “drivel better Sense, than other Men spoke.” Dining at the same House, either on that Day, or soon afterwards, and mention being accidentally made of General Fitzpatrick; the Decline of his intellectual Fire and Vigor of Mind, seemed to be generally admitted by all present. But, even on a Supposition that I erred in so imagining, how do I deserve to have it asserted, that “I seek a disgraceful Popularity, by exposing the Decay of Men of Genius, to make Sport for the Rabble”? The Reviewers ought to be well remunerated for these Sacrifices of Decorum, Truth, and Character. I have spoken of General Fitzpatrick, with Delicacy and Concern. Does Johnston “seek disgraceful Popularity, or make Sport for the Rabble,” when in his Translation of the tenth Satyre of Juvenal, he observes,

“From Marlbro’s Eyes the Tears of Dotage flow,
And Swift expires a Driv’ler, and a Show”?

I leave Dr. Musgrave’s Information and Evidence, to its own intrinsic Weight; only reminding the Reviewers, that when they rashly, as well as ignorantly assert, that “the Tale was patronized by no one, in, or out of Parliament, with the single Exception

of the unscrupulous *Junius*," they probably have never read *Wilkes's* Letter to the Electors of Aylesbury, dated "Paris, 22d October, 1764;" or the memorable "North Briton," No. 45. Whether either, or both these Productions, constitute Authority, I will not venture to say: but they unquestionably tend to corroborate Ross Mackay's Account of the Venality of Parliament in 1763. Anxious as I am to take Leave of my literary Accusers, I must yet notice the Manner in which they inculcate my Mention of the Reports respecting Lord Shelburne's having purchased into the Funds, previous to the Peace of 1783. If there be a Part of these Memoirs, in which, contrary to my ordinary Practice, I have used the greatest caution; leaning throughout the whole Narration, to a Disbelief of the Act imputed, and attributing the Report itself, to "the active Malignity of the first Minister's Enemies," it is on the Point in Question. I have even cited Mr. Pitt's Speech in the House of Commons, of the 21st February, 1783, in which he alluded to "the Arts of Defamation adopted by Lord Shelburne's Opponents, for the Purpose of degrading him in the national Estimation." At the same time, Truth com-

pelled me to add, that “either He subsequently altered his Opinion, or his Actions contradicted his Professions.” And who, I would ask, were Lord Shelburne’s most inveterate Enemies, whose Arts Mr. Pitt characterized as “deserving his Scorn?” Were they not the Adherents of Mr. Fox? Let the Reviewers peruse the Speeches of Burke, and of Lee, then Solicitor General, pronounced in Parliament, between July, 1782, and March, 1783. It seems impossible for Language to accumulate more severe moral Charges, than they respectively heaped upon the first Lord of the Treasury. Lee described him “as deficient in Probity, Integrity, and every estimable Quality.” And am I now, in 1815, to be held up to universal Reprobation, for only mentioning that injurious Reports were circulated relative to the Earl of Shelburne? If History be sunk so low, and if Reviewers are with Impunity, from their Retreat on the banks of the Firth of Forth, or hid in the *Wyndes* of Edinburgh, to exhaust their impotent Rage on any Man who presumes to write with Freedom on public Men and public Events, it is Time to have done with historical Research.

“Frange leves Calamos, et scinde, Thalia, Libellos!”

Only one Word more on this Subject. “ It would not be fit,” say the Reviewers, “ to lay open the Circumstances which occasioned the political Difference of Lord Shelburne and Mr. Pitt, for so trifling a Purpose, as that of confuting Sir N. Wraxall.” Yet, as two and thirty years have now elapsed since it took Place, one should have thought, the Secret might have safely been divulged, especially as it would tend altogether to rescue Lord Shelburne’s public Character from any possible Misrepresentation. But, it seems, Mr. Pitt did not confer the Marquisate of Lansdown on that Nobleman; which Title, we are now told, “ was requested and obtained directly from the King, by the Duke of Rutland, on his accepting the Lord Lieutenancy of Ireland.” I do not presume to contradict this Affirmation of the Reviewers; simply remarking that if the Duke of Rutland could thus dispose of the highest Honours of the Crown, without the Participation or Intervention of the first Minister, in Favour of a Person with whom he was at Variance, or with whom, at least, he had a “ political Difference;” the Duke was more powerful than the first Lord of the Treasury. But, there occurs another apparent Difficulty re-

specting it:—for, the Duke of Rutland went over to Dublin, early in March, 1783, whereas Lord Shelburne was not raised to the Marquisate, before the End of the following November. I leave these little Knots to be untied by the Reviewers.

For all the insulting personal Abuse with which they have honoured me, for the Reflexions on what they are pleased to denominate my “public Morality,” for the generous Solitude that they demonstrate to prevent the Mischief which must arise to Society, from the Diffusion of a Work so malignant, immoral, and licentious, as the “Historical Memoirs,” I thank the Edinburgh Reviewers. Their List of “Gallicisms, Scotticisms, Hibernicisms, Barbarisms, Vulgarisms, incoherent Metaphors, bad English, and absolute Nonsense,” to be found in the Work; and which they kindly point out to the World, as literary Rocks and Quicksands, to be avoided by succeeding Writers; claim the public Gratitude. There is great Philanthropy in such disinterested Attention to prevent so pernicious a Book, *of which two Thousand have been already sold*, from penetrating any further, and corrupting the whole Inhabitants

of the united Kingdom. I trust, the "Society for the Suppression of Vice," will notice as becomes them, these generous Efforts of Men, who can have no Motive except virtuous Indignation, to propel their Endeavours; and who find the Reward of their Labours, in their own conscious Rectitude. Such Men are rare on this side of the Tweed, and should be encouraged, where ever they are found. Yet, with their Zeal, it would be as well, if they mixed a little Knowledge and Moderation. For Instance, when, towards the Conclusion of their Philippic, speaking of me, they say, "He is so perfectly regardless of Truth, that we are convinced, there is not *a single Anecdote* in the Book, which can be safely believed on his Testimony," they compel me to stand on my Defence. Not a single Anecdote! What! not the Account given of Lord Sackville's Reception of the News of the Surrender of the British Army, at York Town! The Earl of Glandore, and Mr. Herbert, of Muckruss, his two Sons in Law, as well as Lord Walsingham, who were all present, are still alive, and could contradict it, if not true. Do the Reviewers mean to doubt my having sent the first Intelligence overland to India, of the Peace of 1783; for not doing which, the late

Lord Sydney, then Secretary of State, narrowly escaped, as I know, being called on to make his Defence in the House of Peers? Will these Gentlemen venture to question my Account of Sir Fletcher Norton's Elevation to the Peerage by Lord Rockingham; and of his kissing the King's Hand at the Queen's Drawing Room, on his being raised to that Dignity? Which of the numerous Particulars recounted, of George the third, of Lord North, or of Mr. Pitt, do they presume to deny? Is it the King's Interview and Conversation with Lord George Germain, previous to his being created a Viscount; or is it the Story of Sir Eyre Coote's red Riband, which covered Fox with no little Ridicule, in November, 1783, just before the Fall of the "Coalition?" This Pyrrhonism is excessive. The most determined Sceptic might believe *something*, out of such a Mass of Anecdote, between 1772 and 1784, as are contained in the "Historical Memoirs."

The Contradictions and conflicting Opinions of these "same learned Thebans," the Reviewers, form not the least ridiculous Feature of their Criticisms; and prove that tho' they have all been "screwed up to the

sticking Place," namely *extinguishing the Work*, yet they differ toto Cœlo, on the main Points of their Judgement. For Instance, the "British Critic" says, (Page 27) "The Materials of his *Second Part* are much superior to those of the *first*. Now hear the "Edinburgh Review." (Page 188) "On the whole it must be owned that the Part of the Book which relates to the *Continent*, is much more tolerable than that which regards *England*." Again, upon the Subject of Mr. Fox, the "Quarterly" and the "Edinburgh," are, (as might indeed be expected,) completely opposed to each other. The first of these worthy Reviews says, "The Friends of the late Mr. Fox will allege that Sir Nathaniel has been unjust to that eminent Man: but *we* think that on this delicate Subject, the Opinion of Sir N. is not only sincere, but, *justified by the Circumstances of Mr. Fox's Life*." After very warmly inveighing against that great Statesman, for "the Mischief of his public Conduct, and his Sacrifices to Ambition," they add, "We say nothing of his Conduct in latter Times. On that Subject we confess, we ourselves could scarcely write impartially. But, with Regard to the Transactions that Sir N. Wraxall

relates, we must do him the Justice to say, that we think his Bias against the Politics of Mr. Fox, is not only *just* and *reasonable*; but, that similar Sentiments are common to the great Majority of Mankind." (See Quar. Review, Page 206 and 207.) These Opinions are Wormwood to the Advocates of Fox, who indignantly exclaim, "To apply such Language as Sir Nathaniel applies to Mr. Fox, is, indeed, to libel all his eminent Contemporaries; and thro' them, the Age and Nation of which they were the Ornaments." Their pious Rage, excited by the Comments which I have made upon their great Idol, makes them strike at Random, and heap upon me at once Accusations of *Sycophancy* and of *Falsity*, blended with *Rancour*, which entitle me at once to their *Indignation* and their *Contempt*. (See "Edinb. Review," Pages 204—206, and 207.) But, it would lead me too far, if I were to attempt to point out the Inconsistencies of Men who seem to be agreed only on one Point, that of earning the Reward of their virulent Attack on the Book and on its Author.

All the Thunders of the Scottish Vatican are concentrated in their concluding Sentence,

which, though long, yet as containing the Quintessence of their critical Acumen, and displaying a Specimen of impartial literary Justice, I must transcribe. Speaking of the Work before us, they say, “By the disgusting or indecent Character of his private Anecdotes; By his Belief in Stories which were always incredible; by his Attempt to perpetuate Weaknesses which ought to be forgotten; by the shameless Profligacy, or atrocious Criminality of the Acts which he imputes coolly and groundlessly to public Men, with no other Distinction than that inspired by a pretty constant, though not a very judicious Attention, to the Wishes of the powerful; He has done his utmost to blacken the Character of his Age and Country, to extinguish all Confidence in political Honesty, and thus to destroy that public Esteem, which is the only outward Reward of those who do not court royal Favour.” Why, what a nefarious Book must this be! It ought to be burnt by the common Hangman, opposite the Tolbooth of Edinburgh, under the immediate Direction of the Scotch Reviewers. The “Essay on Woman,” fell short of it in Indecency. Aretine and Machiavel were not so subversive of public Morality. Boc-

cace, La Rochefoucault, or Brantome, could not compete in Profligacy with such a Work. John Knox himself, their own Countryman, in his holy Rage, against the Whore of Babylon, against Popery and Monarchy, scarcely surpassed the Virulence of these Reviewers. Methinks I behold them, perched on the sacred Mausolæum of David Hume, from the summit of the Calton Hill, darting their *black* Lightnings on my devoted Head! I am nevertheless, I assure them, unappalled and undismayed. These are not the Arrows of *Teucer*: they are the imbecile and harmless darts of *Priam*. “*Telum imbelle, sine ictu,*” which inflict no Wound, and leave no Cicatrice. The Rumbling of *their* Thunder, only reminds us of the brazen hoofed Horses of Salmoneus, and never can imitate the Bolts of Jove.

But, let me calmly ask these worthy Guardians of the Chastity and Purity of the British Press, what is their Object in thus letting loose their Rage on me? Is it in the Hope or Expectation of at once *putting down the Book*, and extinguishing it under Invectives? Do they fancy that the English People will give them Credit for immaculate Criticism,

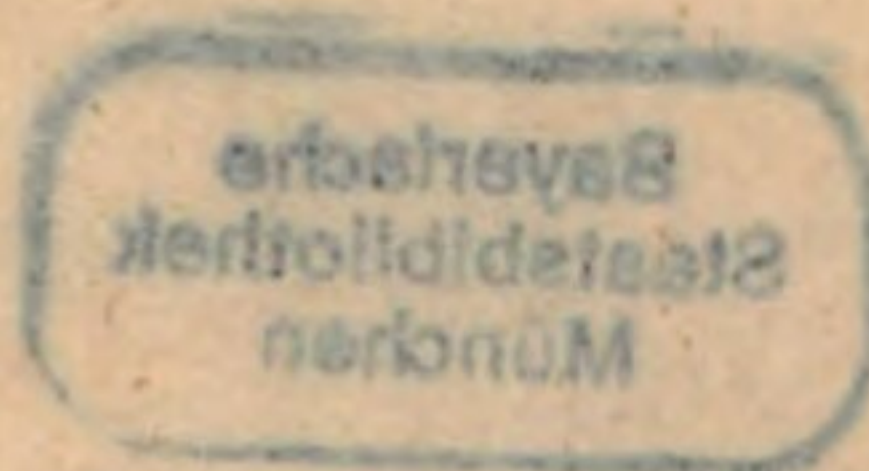
and for unbought Censure? Or do they consider themselves as the Dictators of Literature,

“Knights of the Polar Star, by Learning placed,
To shine the Cynosure of British Taste?”

If these are their Expectations, I trust, they will be speedily undeceived, and they egregiously mistake the Limits of their Power.

“Non illis Imperium Calamo!”

Neither their Praise nor their Satire can operate beyond the Moment, unless it be sustained by Truth, Candour, and Impartiality. In the violent, as well as indecent Attack which they have now made, we trace the inherent Proof of some foul Interference. Else, how shall we account for the “Quarterly and Edinburgh Reviews” forming a literary *Coalition*, like that so famous political Union of 1783, which, as they may remember, covered both Parties with Disgrace and Shame? It is time however that I should take final Leave of these Reviewers, which I do by parodying the Words of *Sterne*, addressed to the venerable Doctors of the Sorbonne, when he hopes that they rested well after their



Consultation. I trust in like Manner, that the Conductors of the "Edinburgh Review," will receive from the Public, *the merited Reward* of their laborious and malevolent Attack on a Work, which however great or numerous, as I admit, may be its Defects, is characterized in every Page, by Qualities vainly to be sought in *their* Productions; namely, Loyalty to the Sovereign, Detestation of French Principles, Abhorrence of Bonaparte and all his fallen Jacobin Gang, Attachment to the Crown, and Reverence for the British Constitution.

N. WILLIAM WRAXALL

Charlton, near Cheltenham,
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